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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 000213

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/B

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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR NIKOLAY VLADIMIR DEPARTS  
PANAMA, SLATED TO BE NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR IN  
RUSSIAN MFA

Classified By: Ambassador Linda E. Watt for Reasons 1.5 (b) & (d)

1. (SBU) This biographical report details Ambassador and Emboffs' impressions of Nikolay Vladimir during his tenure as Russian Ambassador to Panama as well as the highlights of his Curriculum Vitae. Ambassador Vladimir departed Panama in December 2003, informing Ambassador Watt that he had been selected to head the MFA's North American directorate, an appointment he characterized as a great privilege to which he looks forward enthusiastically.

2. (U) Born in 1947 and bearing the diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, First Class, Nikolay Mikhailovich Vladimir entered the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1974. He graduated in 1970 from the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (now MGIMO-Univ.) and in 1982 from the Diplomatic Academy, both under the USSR MFA. Vladimir served twice as in the Soviet Embassy in Hungary (1974-80, 1989-94) and also in the Soviet Embassy in Cuba (1982-85).

3. (U) Most recently, Vladimir served as Russian Ambassador to Panama from August 2000 through December 2003. Vladimir's most recent positions of note are: Deputy Director of MFA North America Department (1996-98), Ambassador to Jamaica, and non resident Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, later to the Commonwealth of Dominica (1998-2000).

4. (C) Vladimir spent most of his term in Panama without his family, though his wife made occasional visits. Mrs. Vladimir, who speaks good English, was caring for elderly parents in Russia, precluding her from accompanying her husband to Panama. Vladimir occasionally visited his wife and two adult children (one son, one daughter) in Russia. His son works on non-proliferation issues at MFA

5. (C) Vladimir speaks excellent Spanish and English. He was active in Panama diplomatic social scene. He was an active promoter of Russian economic interests in Panama. As such, he arranged the visit of a large delegation of Russian businessmen to Panama and, near the time of his departure, was working on a reciprocal visit to Russia by leading Panamanian diplomats. Vladimir was a popular member of the diplomatic corps in Panama, largely due to his easygoing and affable personality. He showed special interest in the U.S., seeking out Embassy officers to discuss bilateral relations which he invariably cast in a positive light (even during the Iraq war when he highlighted mutual U.S./Panamanian interests in a stable Iraq).

6. (C) Vladimir promoted a successful bilateral anti-money-laundering agreement, and coordinated the visit to Russia of the Panamanian Foreign Minister, Director of the Maritime Authority, and other senior officials to sign a reciprocal agreement on maritime issues. He presided over the November 2003 groundbreaking ceremony for a large new Russian Embassy in Panama.

7. (C) Vladimir consistently expressed great affection for the U.S., recalling in particular the month he spent at the University of Georgia in Athens in the mid-nineties. He has traveled extensively in the U.S. as a member of official delegations.

WATT